

# ecoNews — Wire —

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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For immediate release

1. Beach remains posted at Lake Geode; Backbone remains closed
2. Storm Lake bacteria levels elevated
3. Wastewater discharge at Odebolt

## **BEACH REMAINS POSTED AT LAKE GEODE; BACKBONE REMAINS CLOSED**

DES MOINES — A swimming advisory will remain in place at the Lake Geode beach in Henry County at least the next two weeks and the beach at Backbone State Park in Delaware County remains closed.

Marble Beach at Spirit Lake had a high result this week with a sample of 400 for E. coli. The standard for a one-time sample is 235. The beach is being re-sampled with results expected to be back early next week.

The beach at Lake Geode had an E. coli bacteria reading of 30 which is down from previous weeks, but it still exceeds the standard for a geometric mean of 126 comprised of five samples over a 30 day period. The beach will not be able to return an acceptable geometric mean for at least two weeks.

“We are doing a lot of additional sampling in the watershed at Lake Geode to see if we can determine some potential sources of bacteria,” said Janice Boekhoff of the DNR.

The beach at Backbone had a reading of 10 this week and will remain closed while the DNR continues to investigate the wastewater treatment plant at Strawberry Point for alleged violations of its discharge permit. The department is investigating whether effluent from the plant is receiving adequate treatment prior to being discharged into a stream flowing to the Maquoketa River. Backbone Lake, an impoundment of the river, is located between three and four miles downstream from where wastewater treatment plant in Strawberry Point discharges.

Bacteria levels at Iowa's 30 other state park beaches are within acceptable levels.

Weekly beach monitoring results are posted on the DNR's website every Friday afternoon at <http://iowadnr.com/news/beach.html>.

**For more information, contact Kevin Baskins at (515) 281-8395 or Mary Skopec, 319-335-1575.**

## **STORM LAKE BACTERIA LEVELS ELEVATED**

STORM LAKE — Elevated levels of fecal coliform bacteria were found at five out of nine areas that the DNR tested around Storm Lake on Thursday.

The samples showed significantly higher levels of fecal coliform at three of the sites. Preliminary results show levels of 640 at Bel Air Boat Ramp and Beach, 3,100 at Chautauqua Park Beach and 3,200 at Lake Patrol Boat Ramp.

“We are suggesting people use due caution near these sites, but we don't think that these results are related to a wastewater bypass that occurred on Monday,” said Julie Sievers, environmental specialist at the DNR Storm Lake field office.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's water quality standard for recreational contact is 200 colonies per 100 milliliters. Also scoring over 200 were the East Boat Ramp and the Edson Park Beach.

“We will resample the lake on Monday to try to determine the source of the problem, and we are still awaiting results from samples that we sent to the University of Iowa Hygienic Laboratory.”

The DNR does not routinely sample at Storm Lake, since the beaches are not associated with state parks. Of several samples collected since 1999, some samples have shown similar fecal coliform levels that are not related to pollution events. However, Thursday's samples were taken about three days after an estimated 6,000 to 8,000 gallons of wastewater leaked into the lake from a pipeline at the Tyson Fresh Meats plant on Monday night.

Brief, heavy rainfall on Thursday may have caused a spike in bacteria levels, Sievers said.

**For more information, contact Julie Sievers at 712-260-0625.**

## **WASTEWATER DISCHARGE AT ODEBOLT**

SPENCER – Two wastewater pumps failed at a lift station in Odebolt Friday afternoon and are discharging to Odebolt Creek, a tributary of the Maple River.

The pumps failed about 2:45 p.m. and are bypassing their total flow to the creek. City staff are working to correct the problem.

The normal daily flow for the wastewater treatment plant is around 200,000 gallons., although flows may be higher due to recent rainfall.

Downstream notifications were made to the Sac County Sanitarian, Omaha water supply and Council Bluffs water supply.

**For more information, contact Ken Hessenius, at 712-262-4177.**